## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computer implemented method for determining the market demand for an artist

comprising:

artists;

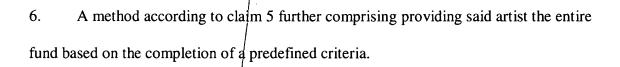
receiving user input to determine which artist to select from a pool of

determining the market demand for said selected artist based on users contributing to a fund for said artist; and

identifying artists that attain a predefined level of user contributions.

- 2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said user input is in the form of user votes.
- 3. A method according to claim 1 further comprising giving users contributing to an artist who attains a predefined level of user contributions a recognition certificate regarding said artist.
- 4. A method according to claim 1 further comprising making available to each artist attaining a predefined level of user contribution funds from the users' contribution to the artist to produce and commercialize the artist.

A method according to claim 4 wherein comprising using said funds to produce a record from said funds when said artist is a musician.



- 7. A method according to claim 1 further comprising maintaining information on said users, and using said information to market said artist.
- 8. A method according to claim 1 comprising limiting the number of users permitted to contribute to said artist to a predefined number.

An apparatus for determining the market demand for an artist comprising:

means for receiving user input to determine which artist to select from a pool of artists;

means for determining the market demand for said selected artist based on users contributing to a fund for said artist; and

means for identifying selected artists that attain a predefined level of user contributions.

A method for an artist to obtain financial support comprising:

receiving and storing on a file server a sample of the artist work;

evaluating the stored artist work from a pool of artists;

selecting an artist based on said artist's work to be eligible for financial contributions from users; and

establishing a fund of any such contributions for an artist who meets a predefined criteria.

- 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising making the fund available to the artist to produce a musical record.
- 12. The method of claim 10 further comprising releasing the fund to the artist based on artist meeting predefined criteria.
- 13. The method of claim 10 further comprising returning the selected artist to the pool of artists if artist fails to meet predefined criteria.
- 14. The method of claim 10 wherein selecting an artist to be eligible for financial support is based on the artist who attains the largest number of user votes.
- 15. The method of claim 10 wherein selecting an artist to be eligible for financial support is determined by a panel of individuals.
- 16. The method of claim 10 wherein selecting an artist to be eligible for financial support is determined in part by a panel of individuals and in part by user votes.
- 17. A computer implemented system for determining the market demand for an artist comprising:
  - a file server; and
  - a processor programmed for implementing instructions for:

receiving and storing user input on said file server to determine which artist to select from a pool of artists;

determining the market demand for said selected artist based on users contributing to a fund for said artist; and

identifying artists that attain a predefined level of user contributions.

- 18. The system according to claim 17 further comprising instructions for refunding user contributions in the fund if the artist fails to attain a predefined level of user support.
- 19. A system according to claim 17 further comprising instructions for redistributing user contributions in a different fund if artist fails to attain a predefined level of user contributions.
- 20. The system of claim 17 further comprising instructions for selecting artists from a pool of artists using inputs from a panel of individuals.
- 21. The system of claim 17 wherein the number of artists that can be selected to receive financial support from the pool of artists is predefined.
- 22. A computer implemented system for presenting artists to determine market demand for artists comprising a computer programmed having instructions for implementing the method of:

receiving and storing the work of artists on a file server;

dividing the stored received works into categories;

selecting works from categories;

elevating selected works into positions that are eligible to receive financial support from users; and

promoting the artists who receive a predefined amount of financial contributions

The system of claim 22 comprising instructions for limiting the number of

-16-

positions available to receive financial contributions from users.

24. An article comprising a computer-readable medium that stores computer-executable instructions for causing a computer system to:

receive user input to determine which artist to select from a pool of artists;

determine the market demand for said selected artist based on users contributing to a fund for said artist; and

identify artists that attain a predefined level of user contributions.

- 25. The article of claim 24 wherein users select and contribute to an artist through a network connection.
- 26. A computer implemented apparatus for determining market demand for an artist comprising:

means for receiving and storing works of artists;

means for enabling users to access the stored works;

means for receiving user input to elevate artist from the general artist pool;

means for making elevated artists eligible for financial contributions from users;

and

means for making financial contributions from users available to artists that meet predefined criteria.